

# I'll be the judge of that

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

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When your home town has been branded with the futuristic sci-fi writer's dream epithets, the Dredded 'dystopian' and 'post-apocalyptic', you know you're going to require a radical plan to knock it back into shape. Need another clue? Sly Stallone played him in the 1995 mega-flop blockbuster; the eponymous Judge Dredd.

Yes, you've guessed it, Judge Joseph Dredd is the answer the forlorn, fragmented residents of Mega-City One have been praying for. Unless they're civil rights advocates of course, or *perps*. Sly don't like perps; they break the long arm of the LLLAAAAAAWWWW!



Sly *is* the LLLAAAAAAWWWW, so it's his remit to crack down on the wayward miscreants infecting the city like a viral plague. Gulp, drokk! and so on. Stationed on North America's east coast, veteran/senior 'street judge', Dredd, has been invested with the power to bypass the courts, thereby acting as judge, jury and executioner. Under his watch, criminals are arrested, convicted, and sentenced on the spot. Even *terminated* should they fail to *comply*, although Dredd doesn't typically insist on the 10-second rule. Nevertheless, it *does* make you speculate how much influence he had over the conception of RoboCop, what with predating Alex Murphy's half-man-half-machine law enforcer by a whole decade.

First appearing in issue two of '2000 After Disaster' in 1977, Judge Dredd - devised by writer John Wagner and artist Carlos Ezquerra - is the anthology comic's longest-serving character. Inspired by Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry (and Reggae artist Judge Dread!), Dredd is a bonafide badass who doesn't let things like silly emotions and girly relationships stand in the way of upholding The Law. He's a psychologically stunted charisma-free zone, and people love him all the more for it.

I can sort of get on-board with that. He's one of a kind, for sure. I don't get the impression he's in the business spurred

by an altruistic sense of duty to protect the vulnerable populace. Dredd's obsessive-compulsive drive to adhere to the logical, infallible principles of The Law seems to be a more significant guiding beacon. It's all he knows so clings to it like a reassuringly familiar comfort blanket.



Saving the human race - the usual motivation of your average superhero - often doesn't quite ring true with me. Is it not a bit arrogant to assume this is the be-all and end-all? Would it be *that* detrimental to the universe if we ceased to exist tomorrow? It ticked along fine before we came along, and likely will continue to do so once we've been wiped out by the next dinosaur invasion, or whatever.

Where were we? Facilitating Dredd's no holds barred pursuit of justice (and fascism to be honest) are his two signature accoutrements; the standard-issue Power Ranger, I mean 'Lawmaster' motorbike and armour-piercing, DNA-coded

'Lawgiver' handgun, each imbued with their own consciousness and artificially intelligent, automated operation.

Sly Stallone - donning the famous identity-guarding Kevlar riot helmet five years after the Amiga game hit WH Smith's shelves - has absolutely nothing to do with Virgin's contribution to the franchise. In fact, Dredd writer, John Wagner, goes a step further informing us that "the story had nothing to do with Judge Dredd, and Judge Dredd wasn't really Judge Dredd even though Stallone was perfect for the part." (Empire interview, 2012)



Developed by Random Access (by no means sounding the death-knell, in *theory*), it's one of the worst licensed non-movie tie-ins of all time, so needs all the help it can get to appear even *vaguely* compelling. Silver screen cheese festival Judge Dredd is barely any better, so you can imagine how much ground he has to make up in pixelated form.

On the plus side, Dredd never takes off his helmet so we *can* at least say it's comic cannon, true to the lore. That's not a slur on Sly's screen presence, I love *him*. And 'slur' was just the first word to spring to mind, sorry.



It wouldn't have been quite so (L)awful had Rob Schneider not spoken... or been Sly's co-star at all. Or if Sly hadn't insisted on rewriting so much of the script, turning it into a slapstick comedy with a formulaic, obligatory love interest, and anti-buddy sidekick. An irrelevant, baffling plot that "told the wrong story" (according to John Wagner) certainly didn't help.

On the contrary, in hindsight, Sly thought the movie wasn't funny *enough*! As he revealed to Uncut magazine in April 2008...

"I loved that property when I read it, because it took a genre that I love, what you could term the 'action morality film' and made it a bit more sophisticated. It had political overtones. It showed how if we don't curb the way we run our judicial system, the police may end up running our lives. It dealt with archaic governments; it dealt with cloning and all kinds of things that could happen in the future.

It was also bigger than any film I've done in its physical stature and the way it was designed. All the people were dwarfed by the system and the architecture; it shows how insignificant human beings could be in the future.

There's a lot of action in the movie and some great acting, too. It just wasn't balls to the wall. But I do look back on Judge Dredd as a real missed opportunity. It seemed that lots of fans had a problem with Dredd removing his helmet, because he never does in the comic books. But for me it is more about wasting such great potential there was in that idea; just think of all the opportunities there were to do interesting stuff with the Cursed Earth scenes. It didn't live up to what it could have been. It probably should have been much more comic, really humorous, and fun.

What I learned out of that experience was that we shouldn't have tried to make it Hamlet; it's more Hamlet and Eggs."

Sly also had an interesting counter-view of the script-meddling and general interference accusations levied against him...

"From what I recall, the whole project was troubled from the beginning. The philosophy of the film was not set in stone, by that I mean "Is this going to be a serious drama or with comic overtones" like other science fiction films that were successful? So a lotta pieces just didn't fit smoothly. It was sort of like a feathered fish.

Some of the design work on it was fantastic and the sets were incredibly real, even standing two feet away, but there was just no communication. I knew we were in for a long shoot when, for no explainable reason Danny Cannon, who's rather diminutive, jumped down from his director's chair and yelled to everyone within earshot, "FEAR me! Everyone should FEAR me!" then jumped back up to his chair as if nothing happened. The British crew was taking bets on his life expectancy."

Karl Urban made some inroads into rescuing Dredd's reputation from the gutter in 2012 when he rebooted the saga with a fresh, self-contained story written and produced by Alex Garland. It illustrates what happens when you produce a straight-laced, ultra-serious adaptation of a comic book star to appease the fans.

It's gritty, gory, gravelly-voiced (a reverential nod to Dirty Harry) and at times shocking, but absolutely deadly-dull with no light relief to break the tension. Worse still, it includes the most feeble post-nemesis-assassination 'one-liner' in movie history: "yeah". It'll certainly make you reconsider Sly's interpretation of the character in a new light.

On a positive note, Dredd (2012) dedicates plenty of screen-time to two strong-willed, competent female actors who aren't only there to be eye-candy (not that the earlier movie was particularly sexist). One is the leading antagonist - a damaged, unrelenting drugs kingpin - and the other a rookie recruit with finely tuned psychic abilities, which add a new dimension to Dredd's crime-fighting techniques.

Celluloid Dredd mk II keeps the helmet firmly in place at all times so earns a Brownie point from Dreddonists right out of the stalls. Then he hasn't got the million-dollar, bankable face like Sly. Possibly that (and once again ignoring the comic's satirical propensity) explains why the second movie adaptation also underperformed at the box office, potentially not breaking even pre-DVD release. It's hard to tell since the budget was reported as a range, rather than a fixed figure.

No prizes for guessing that Random Access's Amiga/Atari ST/Commodore 64 offering is a been-there-done-that by-the-numbers platformer. Spectrum and Amstrad editions were also announced, and depicted in magazine adverts, yet never officially released... or were they? Look up the 'samdisk' release if you're curious.



Adopting Dredd's authentic kit and plot elements from the comic's never-ending 'progs', the game gets off to a promising start. Where the cracks begin to show is in the bland, repetitive, unimaginative gameplay. Every level follows the same course; one nefarious coterie or another is up to no good and we're obliged to put the kibosh on their deviant schemes by destroying X number of stationery Ys.

Lambasting the game with a 44% assessment in March 1991, evidently, it didn't impress Amiga Format critic, Trenton Webb, either...

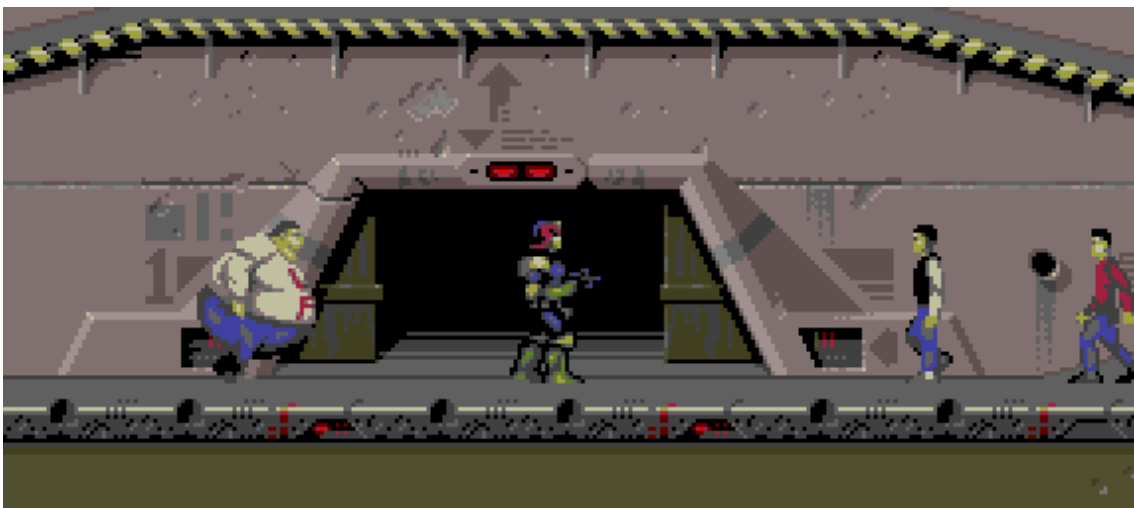
"Dredd is crippled by an average games format. There is limited control over JD himself and somewhat run-of-the-mill graphics. The game is tough, as the crime rate rises incredibly fast, but this does not inject tension."

Mr Anonymous, writing on behalf of CU Amiga, also in March 1991, echoed his sentiments, albeit signing off with a less dire 66% score...



"The main problem with Judge Dredd is the repetitive gameplay. Wandering slowly up and down numerous platforms, with only the odd felon to pick off is extremely dull, and the crime indicator seems to have a mind of its own and doesn't follow any particular pattern.

It's also hard to position Dredd so that he can walk up the inclining platforms, a problem which adds unnecessary frustration to an already dull game. Best avoided, even if you're a Dredd fan."



In the first level, we're up against a marauding tribe of deranged 'Fatties', waddling amok in an impetuous bid to fill their faces. To cut off their 'crime fuel' we must destroy a designated number of food dispensers, whilst inflicting minimal civilian collateral damage.

"Control to Judge Dredd, a 299 for you on Dan Tanner Block.

As Dredd speeds towards Dan Tanner Block the Fatties of Mega-City One are running riot, devouring everything in sight. Four food dispensers are placed around the block; Dredd will have to destroy these to quell the Fatty rampage.

Meanwhile the civs are taking their revenge upon the Fatties and taking any opportunity to shove a Fatty off the building and send him crashing to certain death.

The Fatties desperately attack Dredd who is threatening their food supply:

- Running Fatties charge into him trying to push him from the building.

- Jumping Fatties climb the building and when they are above Dredd they jump, crashing into him as they plummet towards the ground.

- Some of the Fatties are so distraught that they resort to throwing lethal lumps of pizza at him.

Remember, every time one of the Fatties is successful in squashing, hitting or jumping on Dredd, his energy level will be affected."

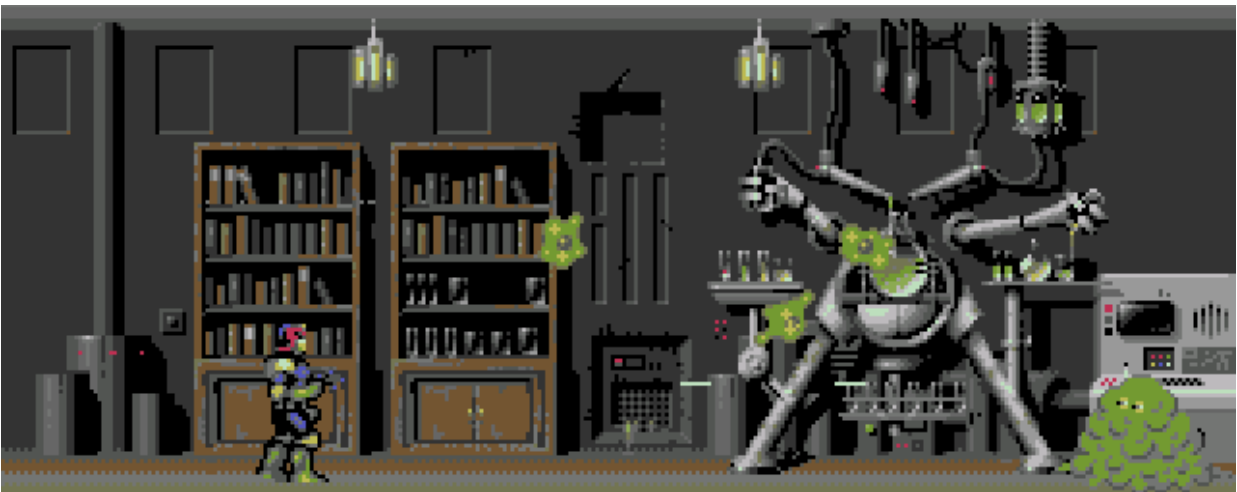
### **An excerpt from the manual**

Hiking the challenge we must contend with a rising crime meter that can only be curbed by arresting - or more likely - *shooting* the perps. If it reaches breaking point we throw in the towel and it's game over.

You might imagine that a cop who has dedicated his entire life to policing the mean streets of hell on earth, and only sleeps for ten minutes a day, would rather join the girl guides than resign, yet exactly that happened twice in the comics (incriminating evidence can be found in 'The Robot Wars' and 'Tale of the Dead Man'). While he swallowed his principles to return to duty in each case, in the game we have no such option. No-one has ever played Judge Dredd

*twice* so restarts are a... erm, non-starter too. It's not the LLLAAAAAAWWWW, it's just common sense.

With all the smashables smashed, to conclude each level we must head for the exit to face its end of level guardian/scenario. Wrapping up level 2, for instance, is a squelchy blob of green slime that shoots mini slime blob projectiles whilst contentedly oozing and pulsating with slimy blobiness in the corner. Slimer would be so proud. Peter Venkman not so much.



"Finally Dredd reaches Fribb's lab at the top of Charles Darwin block, but finds the lab has been overrun by amoebas. On the far side of the lab Dredd can see a considerably regressed Professor Fribb. Dredd must fight his way through the amoebas and arrest Fribb to complete the level. Dredd's task is made infinitely more difficult as the amoebae split into two when shot."

Before we get ahead of ourselves, however, there's plenty of other low-lives to squelch under boot. Although it would be an awful shame to get them messy; they were designed by Gianni Versace for the 1995 movie, you know. He was assassinated two years later by a serial-killing gun-nutter

with delusions of grandeur. Not that I'm suggesting the two events are linked in any way.

"Justice control to Judge Dredd: investigate situation on Charles Darwin Block.

Judge Dredd arrives to discover that the entire population of Charles Darwin Block is slowly regressing, for Frenzied Professor Fribb has developed an enzyme that can reverse the process of evolution. An accident in his laboratory has released some of the enzyme into the ventilation system."



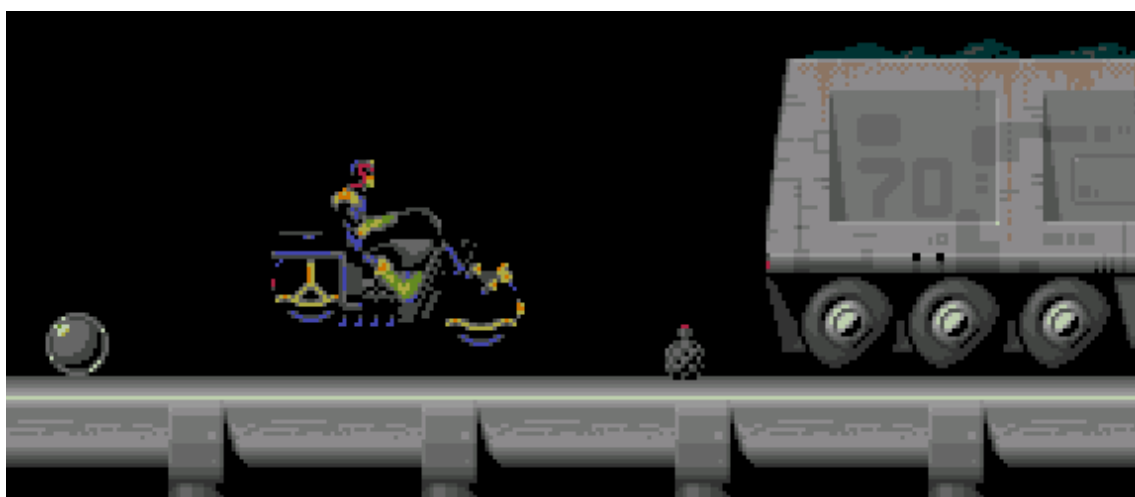
"Dredd must fight his way past various forms of regressed human evolution to reach Fribb's laboratory at the top of the block. On his way he must close the outlets from the ventilation system to halt the spread of the enzyme.

Monkeys roam around the block at different stages of development, throwing rocks and rubble. Some still have enough intelligence to realise when Dredd is arresting them, but some have regressed too far and punch Dredd when he tries to arrest them.

On the higher parts of the block Dredd is attacked by lizards, running towards him at high speed and lunging at his throat. Further down the evolutionary scale, Dredd confronts amoebas, although few are found on the main level."

Aside from a couple of vehicular interludes, a quartet of carbon-copy subsequent excursions ensue before the uneventful finale kicks in. I've played them all thanks to the trainer/cheat, though haven't got the patience to *work* my way through to the end of all of them. Nobody's so wicked they deserve a punishment that extreme.

"Defeated by Dredd, the Fatties have hi-jacked a food Convoy. Dredd's only chance of going on to the next level is to reach the front of the convoy before it reaches the Fatty hideout. Crazy with hunger, the Fatties attack Dredd as he runs along the top of the convoy, determined to hang on to their prize."



"When Dredd has successfully destroyed all of the inlets to the main water supply, Orlok will abort his mission and escape in a sludge truck. Judge Dredd chases his opponent on his Lawmaster avoiding the bombs that Orlok hurls from the back of the truck. Orlok escapes and

if Dredd has survived the shower of bombs he will be awarded a bonus for halting Orlok's first attempt at causing chaos."

Mechanically speaking, the prelude to these more engaging boss battles all share the same approach and feel, yet are delineated by their own plot and adversaries (as elucidated comprehensively in the manual).

It does a superb job of embellishing The Dead Man's upcoming assignments, making them all the more disappointing when we experience these for ourselves. I've been Dredding having to summarise the remaining levels so I'll let Virgin take it from here...

### **"Level three - The Aqua Station**

Control to Judge Dredd, investigate presence of Sov agent, location Atlantic Purification Plant.

Sov agent, Orlock, has been sent to Mega-City One to penetrate blockmania. His mission is to poison the water supply with the blockmania solution. Dredd must destroy all the inlets to the main water supply to stop the contamination.

Aware of his adversary, Orlok has come well prepared with two types of 'Satallats' and two types of 'Sov Agent': Satallat 1 will hover around the Aqua Station and drain Dredd's energy if they hit him.

Satallat 2 is the more lethal class of Satallat: while hovering around the station it sprays out bullets indiscriminately and drops bombs at random, which have a delay device of 20 seconds before they explode, firing bullets in all directions.

On the ground Orlok has his deadly Sov Agents. One type, armed with knives, walk and run around the level trying to stab Dredd, whilst the second type are armed with rifles. They walk onto the screen, take aim and fire three or four shots before they turn round and run off the screen.



### **Level four - Weather Station**

As the first rays of dawn creep over Mega-City One, the Weather Control Judges programme another fine, fair day. Orlok has other ideas: he forecasts rain, deadly rain, contaminated with blockmania solution.

Having failed in his mission at the Aqua Station, Orlok has contaminated the weather station's water supply. Judge Dredd must destroy the weather control devices to stop the contaminated water raining down on Mega-City One.

Orlok has reprogrammed some of the Weather Station's maintenance robots to attack anybody that they meet on

the station. If Dredd gets too close these robots will zap him with blue sparks and drain his energy levels.



The normal maintenance robots roam the station fulfilling their daily tasks of repairing and cleaning. If Dredd gets in their way they will force him to the edge of the station and push him off. While Dredd is endeavouring to destroy the weather control devices, Orlok will be on the Weather Station and will shoot Dredd whenever he gets the opportunity. Also, some of the Class 2 Satallats are hovering around dropping the deadly delay bombs and spraying out bullets indiscriminately.

### **End of level four - The Shuttle**

Orlok makes his escape from the Weather Station in a shuttle. Dredd gives chase on a hover bike and will have to shoot down Orlok's shuttle from the skies.





## Level five - Blockmania

Control to Judge Dredd, we have possible Block Mania in your vicinity. Heavy firing has broken out between two neighbouring blocks.

Block fighting is a common feature of Mega-City life. Boredom, overcrowding, mass unemployment all combine to set tensions on a razor edge. The slightest incident can invoke a Block War.

A serious disturbance is developing: two rival blocks have both obtained two large guns each and are attempting to blow each other to oblivion. Dredd must destroy all four guns and go to the command centre which is situated on the building on the left of the screen.



Crazed 'civs', some with guns and some with bombs, hamper his progress, whilst suicidal jumpers, crazed by the boredom and loneliness of their existence, leap from the higher levels of the blocks.

Usually jumpers will try to land on someone just to cause an extra bit of aggravation as they die. The most courageous of the blockmania freaks are the 'fighters'. These brave men actually try to punch Judge Dredd.



**End of level five - The Big Gun**

On finally reaching the command centre Dredd discovers a Mega-gun. One of the crazed 'Perps' is manning the gun and as Dredd enters the command centre starts firing at him. To survive Dredd must blast through the shield on the front of the gun and kill the 'Perp'. When this happens the gun will self-destruct.



## **Level six - The Dark Judges**

From another dimension have come the Dark Judges, their mission - to kill. In their dimension, being alive is illegal and now they have come to Mega-City. One to wreak havoc upon its citizens.

Dredd's job is to send them back to their own dimension by using dimension bombs. These can be found scattered around the level but, while Dredd is collecting these bombs, the Dark Judges are killing as many 'Civs' as they can, and the crime rate is increasing to dangerous levels.

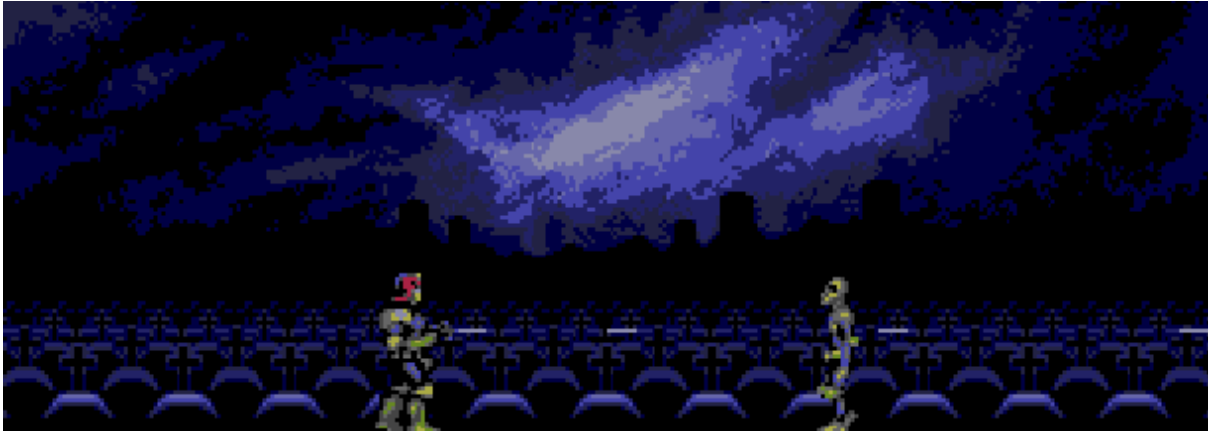


Judge Death is the leader of the dark Judges. If he gets close to Dredd he will reach out and squeeze his heart, causing Dredd to loose a dangerous amount of energy.

Judge Fear is even more pernicious. If he gets the chance to stand in front of Dredd he has the power to drain Dredd's energy.

Any contact with Judge Mortis is disastrous for Dredd's energy level, and if Mortis touches a dimension bomb it just turns to dust.

The Fourth Judge is Fire, who will throw firebombs at Dredd. As they hit him they'll explode causing a massive energy drain. This is the most difficult level in the game for, whilst combating the Dark Judges, Dredd is in danger of losing vast amounts of energy and, whilst the Judges walk the streets of Mega-City One killing 'Civs', the crime rate will rise.



## End of level six - The Dark Judges

Once Dredd has collected all of the available dimension bombs he will have to face the Dark Judges one by one. This takes place in the Doomsday Room. Each Dark Judge will walk into the room and Dredd will have to drop a dimension bomb and stand well clear of the explosion. If successful he will have saved the city from a dreadful menace."

In due course - tied to your computer with no alternative games to play as some kind of sick torture technique - Dredd saves the city and is offered the cushy, chief judicial role in the 'Council of Five'. He's not tempted for a second, dogmatically declining the gravy train to get back to business as usual. Just like in the Sly movie, intransigent street judging is revered like faith in a predestined, intoxicating cult. *The Judge was born* (genetically engineered in the movie) to judge. Even his best chum.



David McCandless neatly summed up the banal experience, reviewing the game for Zero in November 1990. Oddly he still apportioned Dredd an above-average 78% despite his narrative demolition, man.

"The levels are very samey; a complex framework of horizontal and diagonal platforms. The objectives are very samey, and the ways of eliminating enemies a bit samey too. In fact, 'samey' seems to be the problem with the whole game. There's no way enough variety in it. The end-of-level scrolling sub-games add something but they end too quickly. The perps' movement patterns are too fixed. Even athletic old Dredd seems rather restricted at times, by Drokk."

The longest credits sequence in the history of gaming rolls, thanking everyone who has ever lived for playing their part in its development. You may be able to spot that some of their contributions are a tad esoteric. Eventually reach the end and it rewinds to begin again from the first entry, perfectly complimenting the endurance test that preceded it. Watch it all and you'll feel like you've been in service as long as Dredd!



Because he ages in real-time - in contrast to the frozen maturation of so many other superheroes - in 2019 (2141 in *his* universe) he's 72 years old. Surely it can't be too long before his knees start creaking and he regrets not accepting that desk job? Never! He'd sooner take the 'long walk' of retirement into the 'Cursed Earth' than the easy way out.



Being so pitifully dull, the main game makes its preamble look all the more enticing. To get into the 'action' we log on to a KM-DOS based terminal using the password 'dredd'. Then have the option to read our (junk) mail, explore the folders on its hard drive, or play two classic arcade games; Bomber and Snakes. Sadly, these are far better than what follows if you type 'exit'.

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JUSTICE CENTRAL MAIN TERMINAL
(C) KML 2034, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

64 MBYTES AVAILABLE TO USER

READY.

> LOGON:DREDD
USER ID RECOGNISED.
WELCOME JUDGE DREDD.
TYPE 'HELP' FOR COMMAND LIST

>
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Bomber aka City Bomber aka Blitz aka Air Attack is the one you might have played on your Speccy, Vic-20, Commodore PET or Acorn Electron in the early '80s. It involves flying over a cityscape teeming with skyscrapers at decreasing altitudes with each pass, dropping bombs to clear a path to land. Each direct hit clips off the top of a building making it less likely that you'll hit it on the next sweep. If you crash it's game over. Funnily enough, it's not nearly so popular since 9/11. Trivia-ly, the original version was populated by a series of rock pillars protruding out of a canyon.

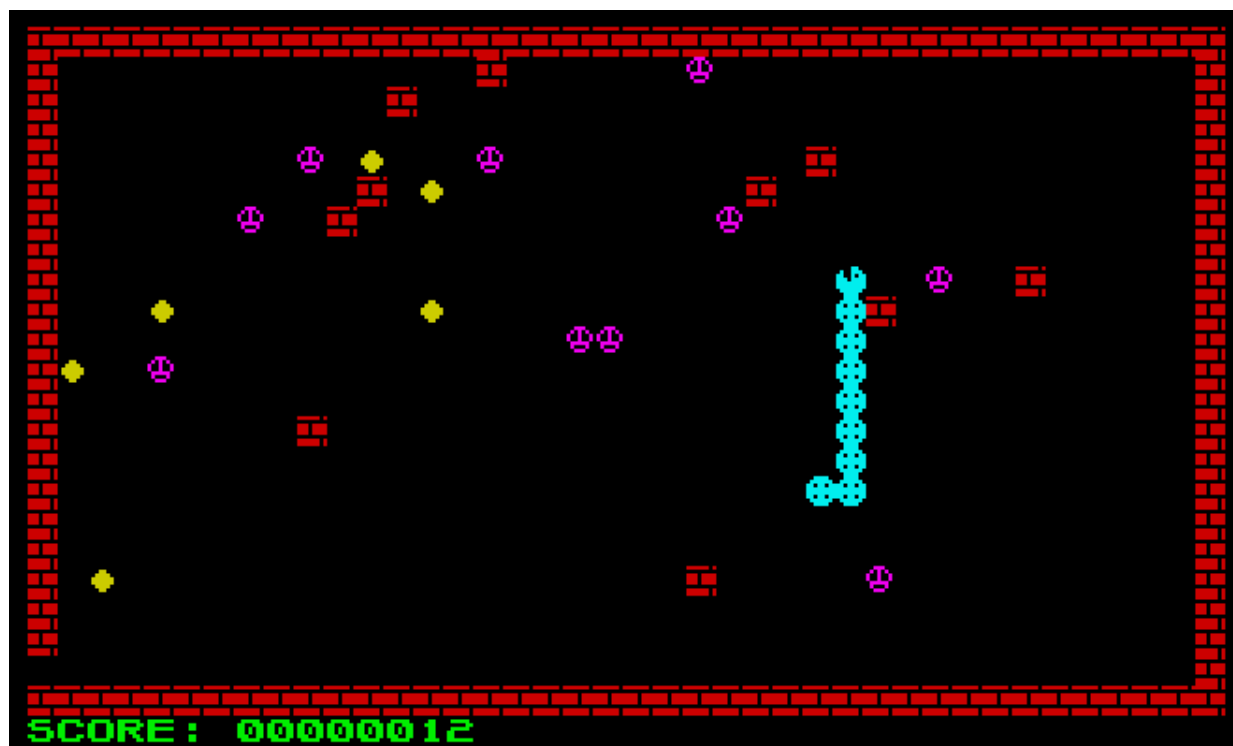




Snakes (built upon the 'Blockade' concept) might be more familiar to younger gamers since it was crow-barred onto everyone's first Nokia phone in the late '90s. You initially guide just a snake's head around a landscape eating pellets that equate to extra snake body segments.

Remember those articulated toy ones that worked like this? You could hold them by the tail in mid-air, and the whole jointed creature would stay rigid while swaying back and forth horizontally. No? As we were then.

With each pellet swallowed, another body segment is added to our length, stretching out far behind the head as a tail. Navigating with this encumbrance in tow becomes more and more complicated as it grows. Ultimately it extends so far we can't help hitting ourselves head-on as we attempt to meander around the level cobbling the remaining pellets and avoiding toxic skulls.



The next best thing to do at the DOS prompt is to type the cheat code 'Brucken playing Hero Quest', which allows you to skip to the next level whenever you get stuck/chronically depressed. Pressing the Amiga help key (page down on most Windows keyboards) ends the current level, displays the congratulations screen and plonks you down again at the start of the next stage.

There you can amuse yourself with the next leg of the walking simulator, for that's all it amounts to. There's so little to do other than plod lethargically between various destructible nodes, half-heartedly bashing the fire button occasionally to dispatch a theme-appropriate adversary that you'll find yourself daydreaming about studying the drying cycle of freshly painted fences. Or switching over to your PC to have a dabble at that mundane house-keeping torturer that only makes sense to javelin chuckers after succumbing to an accidental lobotomy. The Sims, that's the one.



What say ye Robin Hogg and Stuart Wynne of Zzap! fame?  
(in April 1991, after meting out a 37% Judgement)

"Unfortunately, Virgin *do* have a habit of mucking up the license. The first game failed miserably and the second barely holds its head above water, the simplistic gameplay not doing the game any favours.

Different missions appeal with graphic and objective variety but there's a LOT of wandering around involved and it can be an annoyingly long haul to get anywhere; make one mistake and that's it.



For use of machine, the C64 game comes out on top: Dredd is a good looking sprite, the falling fatties are a laugh and the backdrops look slightly grimmer/authentic than the 16-bit Mega-City One - they just haven't tried on the Amiga.

I enjoyed the C64 game because at least you are given a chance - the frustration factor of the Amiga game seems to be set to max and I'm not playing it again!"



"Random Access have done a string of good conversions so hopes were high for a license like Dredd where they had freedom to develop some original gameplay. Sadly about the only mildly original aspect is the varied end-level confrontation subgames which, in the event, aren't that great.

Worse, the main gameplay is so tedious and so difficult on the Amiga that Virgin have supplied a map showing the location of the vital aspects. This map doesn't work on the C64, which is marginally more playable with a more controllable crime rate (on the Amiga it shoots up so fast a single mistake can be fatal).

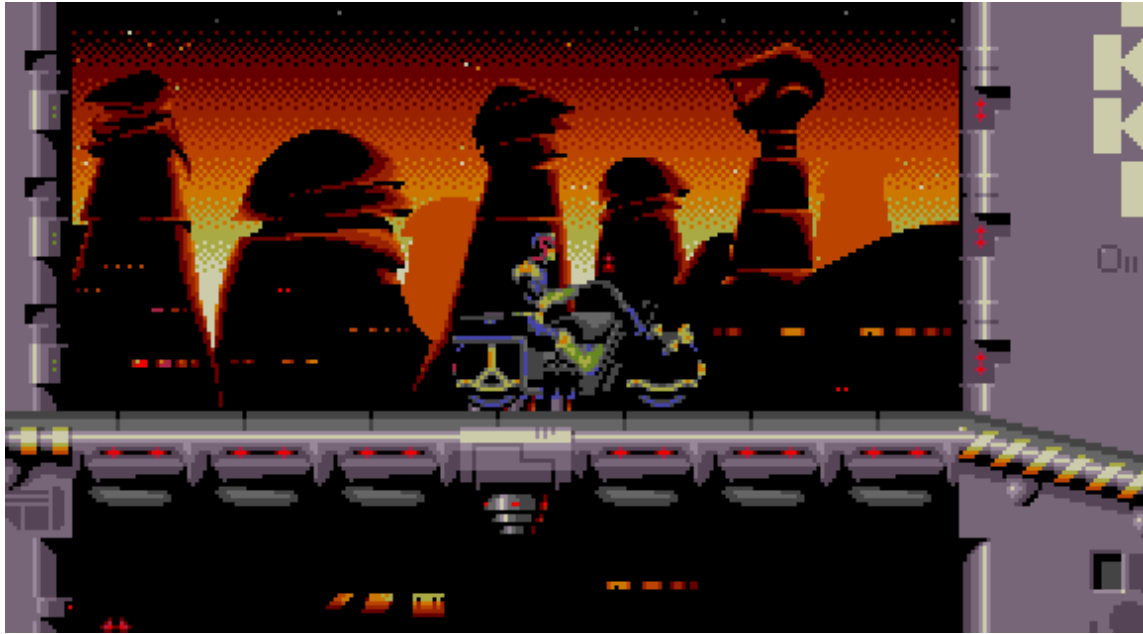
The C64 also has superior graphics and remembers the location of baddies when you switch between bike and man - on the Amiga the characters are scrambled so getting off your bike to shoot someone is often pointless (and extremely irritating!)."



We maintain the same gun throughout, though source additional ammo types along the way to enhance its efficacy, accurately reflecting our Lawgiver's multifaceted nature in the comics. 'Shift' flips between the available options, granting us access to homing missiles or high-powered laser beams, aside from the standard-issue variety. No rubber ricochet, armour-piercing, stun, heat-seeking, incendiary or hi-ex bullets, unfortunately. His scattergun, daystick and knife are similarly AWOL.

Spacebar calls upon the services of our trusty Lawmaster who is always on standby listening for our command, just like Alexa or Siri. It probably feeds back to the council too without asking us to sign a waiver. ;)

In any case, whenever we activate it we clamber aboard and continue to navigate the buildings on two wheels. Ironically this is barely any faster than strolling, and we can no longer shoot our weapon until we dismount. Where are the Lawmaster's side-mounted cannons and central 'Cyclops' laser? All the while the crime rate soars since we're no longer assassinating goons, so it's about as much use as a Blu-ray add-on for a ZX Spectrum.



Oh, actually, one thing it *is* useful for is ascending ramps. You wouldn't believe how difficult this is to achieve on foot since pushing diagonally up at what you'd presume to be the right moment tends to make Dredd jump, or ignore the command altogether. Instead, we pass right by on the horizontal plane, missing the intersection entirely.

To work around these ridiculously tricky manoeuvres we end up bunny-hopping around much of the scenery, praying we'll land where we would expect to without a second's thought in most other platformers. It's hard to comprehend just how awful the controls are until you experience/endure them for yourself.

You won't want to master them so much as switch off the game and never look back. It partly explains why there's no longplay available on YouTube. That and the tremendously tedious gameplay that only really connects with the source material by way of the neatly packaged scenarios presented in the manual. This is actually Judge Dredd's greatest strength. Someone put far more effort into the documentation than the game itself.



Being a superhero we don't actually die upon failing a mission, we just end up in hospital to recover, or resign. Harvesting shields to boost our firepower or restore our health only prolongs the misery. There's no music throughout the six levels to break the monotony, all we have to look forward to are the monochrome, low resolution, barely-there comic strips found between the levels as bridging gizmos.



Sly's movie was unceremoniously relegated to the dumpster by the critics. He was even nominated for a Golden Raspberry Award, while Gene Siskel 'championed' Judge Dredd for inclusion in his 'Worst of 1995' review.

Had he branched out into Amiga game reviews I doubt very much he'd have approved of Random Access's adaptation of



the comic either. To Dreddheads (or whatever) it's treated as the sacrilegious pariah who cast shame upon the unblemished record of a legendary totalitarian anti-hero with a vintage precisely as old and venerated as Star Wars.

I wouldn't go as far as saying it's criminal, though it *is* a total waste of a lucrative, cherished license, thoroughly devoid of the dark social and political satire that defines Dredd. No-one spells this out more clearly than John Wagner himself. When he was interviewed for a special feature by The One in January 1991 they completely swerved the inevitable question of whether or not he's played the game of the sprawling franchise he co-created, and if so, what his opinion is. That speaks volumes, or 'progs' rather.

No-one has dared to tempt fate by tackling JD's *playable* angle since Tin Man Games published the choose your own text adventure, 'Judge Dredd: Countdown Sector 106', in 2012.

Ironically, it was very well received... and has since been discontinued due to the expiry and Rebellion's withdrawal of the Aussie developer's license. Proving that The Law is a dystopian ass... wearing a fascist badge and a Death Race 2000 outfit! Perhaps it's safer to Jyde for yourself these days. That's not a typo. Look it up.

I knew I'd say that.